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Victims of War in Sri Lanka: A Quest for Health Consensus

International Conference on Health
Manning Hall, University of London Union, London

17-18 September 1994



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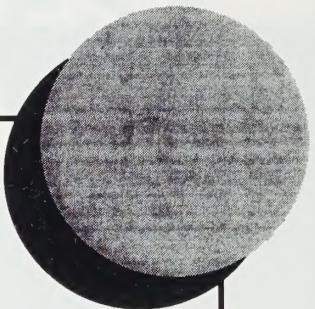
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Message from the organisers

VICTIMS OF WAR IN SRI LANKA: A QUEST FOR HEALTH CONSENSUS

This Conference on the "Victims of the War in Sri Lanka" is being held at a time of optimism and hope. The hope is that the new Prime minister, herself an individual who would have felt pain and anguish of political violence will have the courage and persistence to bring an end to this brutal war. It is also our hope that the benefits of peace will not only accrue to the Tamils but also to all the other communities in Sri Lanka.

The Conference, which seeks to understand the health needs of the War Victims in Sri Lanka is unique in that it is being jointly organised by Tamil organisations from two different continents. Mobilization of the Tamil diaspora all over the globe to participate in the reconstruction of the Tamil Homeland could very well result in more such global meetings.

The Conference which is the result of hard work by a few dedicated individuals, is only a beginning. The work that remains to be done is massive and enormous challenges await those who will continue the work begun by this Conference. With the networking and understanding that will happen at this Conference better and more meaningful programmes will be created which will facilitate wider participation by Tamils all over the world. Such a process requires an understanding of the realities in the war torn areas and the presence of many dedicated workers from these areas will accomplish this.

It is hoped that all who participate in the Conference will go away with better understanding of the health status of the victims of war and from that understanding start a process of constructive action to help the Tamil Homeland.

**Dr V Sivapathasuntharam
President
Medical Institute of Tamils**

**Mr S Sivagnanam
President
Tamil Information Centre**

**Dr Shan K Sunder
President
Tamil Refugee Relief Organisation (California, U.S.A.)**

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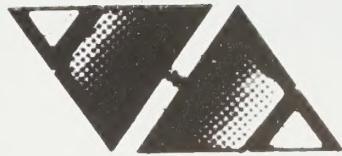
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Victims of War in Sri Lanka: A Quest for Health Consensus

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

17th September 1994

8.00 **Registration and Coffee**

9.30 **Welcoming address**

*Mr V Sivapathasuntharam,
President, Medical Institute of Tamils, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Royal London Hospital, London, UK*

9.35 **Opening Address**

*Worshipful the Mayor of Camden
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PLENARY SESSION 1

Chair: Rt. Rev. Kenneth Fernando Bishop of Colombo, Chairman, National Christian Council (Sri Lanka)

Scene Setting- Nature of the Problem

9.45 **Health as a human Right:**

The impact of war on health status of people.

Dr David Kausman, Medical Co-ordinator, Amnesty International, UK

10.00 **An overview of the effects of war in Sri Lanka**

Mr K Manickavasagar, Government Agent, Jaffna District, Sri Lanka

10.25 **Current pattern of health care and resource allocation.**

Dr C S Natchinarkinian, Lecturer, Department of Community Medicine, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

10.45 **Questions & Comments**

**Plenary Session 1 is Sponsored by
Standing Committee Of Tamils(SCOT)**

11.15-11.30 **Coffee**

PLENARY SESSION 2

Chair: Mr Bryn Woulfe, Executive Secretary, NGO forum on Sri Lanka

The special needs of high risk groups in the armed conflict in Sri Lanka.

11.30

Mental Health

Dr Dhaya Somasundaram, Head of Dept. of Psychiatry, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

11.45

Maternal & child health

Dr N Sivarajah, Head of Department of Community Medicine, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

12.00

Acute trauma and rehabilitation

Dr (Mrs) S Theivendran, Jaipur Foot Workshop Project, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

12.15

Health of women and elderly

Mrs Saroja Sivachandran, Director, Centre for Women and Development, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

12.30

Health of displaced people and Refugees

Dr Jolanda De Vries, Consultant WHO, Department of Psychology, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

12.45

Discussion

Plenary Session 2 is Sponsored by
Tamil Refugee Action Group (TRAG), Tamil Refugee Housing Association (TRHA)
Tamil Refugee Training & Employment Centre (TR Tec)

1.15-2.15

Lunch & View Exhibition

2.15-4.15

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Workshop I

Mental Health of people exposed to violent environment

Facilitators:

- (i) *Dr (Mrs) S Parameswaran, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, UK*
- (ii) *Dr Dhaya Somasundaram*

Workshop II

Physical disability, torture and rehabilitation

Facilitators:

- (i) *Mr N Kandasamy, Co-ordinator, Human Rights Desk, Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality, Sri Lanka*
- (ii) *Dr S Sooriakumaran, Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, Queen Mary's University Hospital, London, UK*
- (iii) *Dr (Mrs) S Theivendran*

Workshop III

Acute services access

Facilitators:

- (i) *Dr Jerry S Ehrlich, Paediatrician, New Jersey, USA*
- (ii) *Dr (Miss) N Kanagaratnam, Director, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna, Sri Lanka*
- (iii) *Dr S Sanmugathas, Provincial Director of Health services NE Province, Sri Lanka*

Workshop IV

Public health & communicable diseases

Facilitators:

- (i) *Dr R Jeyaratnam, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, East London & City Health Authority, London, UK*
- (ii) *Dr P Ratnasabapathy, Former Regional Director of Health Service, Sri Lanka*
- (iii) *Dr S Sivayoham, Consultant in Public Health Medicine & Communicable diseases, South Lancashire H.A., Eccles, UK*

Workshop V

Health of displaced people and refugees

Facilitators:

- (i) **Mr Mohamed Ali Azeez**, Co-ordinator, Sri Lanka Muslim Refugee Assistance, Sri Lanka
- (ii) **Dr Jaya Henry**, Head of Food Science and Nutrition, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK
- (iii) **Dr (Mrs) Jeyaluxmi Thevarajah**, Medical Officer, OFERR, India

Parallel Sessions are Sponsored by
Dr S Palaniappan & Dr A R Stanislaus, Enfield, UK

4.15-4.30

Tea

4.30

Reporting from workshops & discussion

Chair: Dr N Sreeharan, Director of Clinical Research, Smith Kline Beecham Pharmaceutical,
and formerly Professor of Medicine, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

6.00

Close of meeting

18th September 1994

8.30

Registration and coffee

9.30

Welcoming Address

Dr S Pasupathy Rajah, Director, Tamil Information Centre

PLENARY SESSION 1

Chair: Ms Liz Philipson, Chair, War on Want, London, UK

**Scene Setting
Responding to Health and Health Care Needs**

9.35

Institutional Role and Challenges

Dr K Arulanantham, Paediatrician/Endocrinologist, Consultant OFERR programme, India
and Asst Clinical Professor, UCLA, USA

9.55

Humanitarian Aid:

Reflections on Health Assistance to people in the war zone

Dr Swee Chai Ang, Chief orthopaedic consultant at Newham General Hospital, London
and Founder member of Medical Aid for Palestinians

10.10

The role of UNHCR in Refugee Care:

Personal safety and the provision of humanitarian assistance and relief.

Mr Bo Schack, Senior Regional Legal Adviser for Asia and Oceania, UNHCR, Geneva

10.25

Role of Media in conflict areas

Sri Lankan perspective:

Mr A Sivanesachelvan, Editor-in-Chief, Virakesari, Express Newspapers (Ceylon) Ltd., Sri Lanka

Western Media:

Ms Dyannah Stevenson, Campaign against militarism

10.40

Question & Comments

Plenary Session 1 is Sponsored by
Tamil Lawyers Association (UK)

11.00-11.15 **Coffee**

11.15-1.15

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Workshop I

Repatriation: expectations and realities

Facilitators:

- (i) *Mr Malcolm Rodgers, Sri Lanka Project Co-ordinator, British Refugee Council, UK*
- (ii) *Ms Helena J Whall, Researcher, Tamil Information Centre, London, UK*
- (iii) *Ms Bo Schack, Senior Regional Legal Advisor for Asia & Oceania, UNHCR, Geneva*

Workshop II

Rehabilitation of War-related Victims

Facilitators:

- (i) *Ms Helan Bamber, Director, Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, UK*
- (ii) *Mr V Sivagnanavel, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, General Hospital, Bishop Auckland, UK*
- (iii) *Dr M Jegarajah, Consultant Chest physician, Rochdale, UK*

Workshop III

Development Assistance for better health

Facilitators:

- (i) *Mr D P Agastian, President, North East Economic Development Society, Sri Lanka*
- (ii) *Mr S Balakrishnan, Executive Secretary, Centre for Development Alternatives, Kandy and Consultant for Policy Research on Health Programmes in the Estate and Rural areas of Sri Lanka*
- (iii) *Mr Sri Shanmugarajah, President, Dry Zone Development Foundation, Sri Lanka*

Workshop IV

Community Initiatives in Health services

Facilitators:

- (i) *Dr S Arunachalam, Consultant Physician with special interest in the elderly, Edgware General Hospital, London, UK*
- (ii) *Dr Anna Dony, Clinical Psychologist, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, UK*
- (iii) *Sr Victorine James, Lecturer, School of Nursing, Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

1.15-2.15

Lunch & View Exhibition

PLENARY SESSION 2

2.15

Reporting from workshops & Discussion

Chair: *Dr K Sivakumar, Consultant Psychiatrist, Maidstone Hospital, Maidstone, UK*

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Saiva Munnetta Sangam(UK)

3.45-4.00

Tea

4.00

The way forward

Prof R Balarajan, Professor of Public Health, Institute of Public Health, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK

5.00

Vote of Thanks & Close of meeting

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